

SATURDAY, MARCH 26. 1743.

Admonere volumus, non mordere; prodesse, non ledere;
consulere moribus hominum, non officiis. ERASM.



It is an old and very just Maxim, That the Corruption of the best Things becomes the worst; and this, I think, appears in nothing more clearly than in our modern Way of writing Characters. For whereas nothing is more instructive, or more entertaining, than these Kind of Portraits, when skillfully and faithfully drawn; so it is not easy to imagine any Manner of Writing more capable of deceiving the Understanding, and poisoning the Affections, than this very Method of Characterizing, when maliciously applied. It is, in short, the most complete Violation of the Ninth Commandment; which, if I am rightly informed, runs literally thus, *Thou shalt not rise up a false Witness against thy Neighbour*; which is the most emphatic Description that can be given of such a Writer. He does not stay till he is called, but he rises, or rather his Passions stir him up, not to speak the Truth for the sake of Justice, but to spread the Idol of his own Inclination, and to shew the Character of his Neighbour in false Light to the People.

The moral Characters of *Theophrastus* is not only one of the most elegant, but one of the most instructive Works of Antiquity. Here we see what Satyr ought to be, because here we see the Characters of the Vicious, without any Injury done to particular Men. The Philosopher had a mind to hold up a Mirror to his Disciples, in which, if they were guilty, they might see themselves, and, by a View of their Deformities, be led to Amendment. For there is this Difference between the Humours of the Body, and the Defects of the Mind, that whereas the former are not, the latter are in our Power, and every Man may be a Beauty if he pleases. Many of our modern Writers take quite a contrary Method, because they have an Intention opposite to his; they write with a Design not to instruct, but to expose; their View is not to raise a Harrow against Vice, but an Aversion to particular Men, and therefore they do not exhibit the Faults they find, but attribute such Qualities to the Persons they describe, as in their own Opinion will render them most odious. For this Reason, philosophic Characters ought to be esteemed the most useful, so this Sort of political Daubing ought, in the Opinion of every candid, generous, and well-meaning Man, to pass for the very worst kind of Practice that either Pen or Pencil can be employ'd in. It ought to be distinguish'd from hasty or passionate Reproach, as the Law distinguishes Man-slaughter from Murder; the former is in some Measure excused, as flowing from a sudden Start of Temper, whereas the latter proceeds from a premeditated Design of destroying, and therefore, it may sometimes meet with, yet it has not the Claim to Forgiveness.

This Crime resembles Murder too in another Respect, that where there are Minds black enough to receive a Design of committing it, no Armour can give a sufficient Defence against it. Vain are the finest compliments, useless the most illustrious Virtues; as it is in the Power of the meanest Assassin to destroy the greatest, so the best of Men are always in the reach even of the lowest Scribbler in this Way. So that, the worst of all the ancient Philosophers, in the use of all his good Qualities, notwithstanding his instructive Behaviour, and the Purity of his Manners, had only his Reputation torn to Pieces, but his Life taken by a Couple of pitiful Declaimers, who had exercised themselves in this kind of Picture drawing. He was in himself a Man of the greatest Piety, had the justest and truest Notions of moral Virtues, and had more towards cultivating human Reason, and the good of Men, than all the Sages that went before him; yet these Miscreants undertook to represent him as absolute Atheist, one who debauch'd the Manners, corrupted the Understandings of his Disciples. The Men, to whom they shew'd the Picture, were made to think it like him, and, in that Fit of Madness, condemn'd the Original, who suffer'd, 'tis true, but for Moment; Posterity has done Justice since to him and them. We pay to his Memory every Thing short of adoration, and we scarce think any Punishment bad enough for them, except Damnation itself. When one reflects coolly upon this, when one remembers that every bad Man has a Power of doing, and that the best are exempted from suffering, ought not to check us in giving Credit to such kind of invective Characters, and furnish an Antidote to every Poi-

son of the Sort. Would any Man be content the World should frame an Opinion of him from the Report of his most bitter Adversary, or would he think it fair to ask another Man's Enemy for his true Character? If not, how can he reconcile to himself shewing the least Indulgence to such Pieces, or why should he subject himself to that elegant Reproof of the Satyrists,

The Reader's Malice helps the Writer's out.

It is the Duty of such as have any Regard to their own Reputation, to be tender of other Men's. Whenever a Character is set before them, they ought to consider with what View it is written, to what End presented them to read. It should be their first Enquiry, whether he who drew it had a just Call; their next, whether he has proper Skill. It would be ridiculous to expect a Likeness from a Painter who had never seen the Object he pretended to depict; but is there less Folly in believing a Writer should be able to strike out the moral Likeness of one with whom he never convers'd, with whose Thoughts he is unacquainted, whose Discourses he never heard, of whose Actions he can be no proper Judge; but above all, can there be any Madness equal to that of believing a Man who is known to have an Interest in deceiving, who speaks with no other View, and who loses his Time if he does not make you lose your Senses.

These, I confess, are but a few loose and hasty Thoughts, upon a very important Subject; but loose and hasty as they are, they will sufficiently answer my Purpose, if they oblige the ingenious Reader to consider the Topick attentively. I have no sinister Aim, no hidden Point to carry; and therefore, as I am sure it is needless to take much Pains to convince the Judgment, so I am not at all sorry that I want Ability to move the Passions. All I endeavour is, to engage Men to do as they would be done by, and to treat People's Characters with the same Justice and Humanity which the Law shews to their Persons. In a free Country there is no Man above Justice, and therefore no Man who thinks himself free, should think it beneath him to do Justice; which yet every Man must think, who countenances, or even excuses, that Kind of Writing which I have endeavour'd to expose.

I R E L A N D.

Dublin, March 19. On Monday last died, in the 90th Year of his Age, Capt. George Davidson, of the Royal Regiment of Foot commanded by General St. Clair. He enter'd into the Service the latter End of the Reign of K. Charles II. and served all the Wars abroad under the Reigns of K. William and Q. Anne with great Reputation; and on Wednesday his Remains were decently inter'd in St. Paul's Church.

This Week died the Rev. Father Aeneas Lyons, who was very active in the Time of the great Frost, in assisting the Sick and Poor, and doing Acts of Charity at other Times, which makes his Death a Loss to the Publick.

Also a few Days ago died the Reverend Father James White, of St. John's Well, who was of an ancient good Family in the County of Westmeath, and transplanted to Connaught in the Year 1641.

H O M E P O R T S.

Dublin, March 17. On the 14th arrived the William and Peter, Eaton, from Faro; the Robert and Ellis, Cusack, from Philadelphia; the Pretty Peggy, Whitty, from Lisbon; and the Thomas, McQuoid, from Liverpool, with 47 Hogsheads of Tobacco, and Lead, bound to Dantzick. Sailed the Mary and Betty, Martin, for Rochfort. On the 15th arrived the Clotilda, Roddery, from Rotterdam. On the 16th sailed the Thomas, McQuoid, for Dantzick with Tobacco. On the 17th sailed the St. Jean Louis of Brest, Provost, for Havre.

Falmouth, March 21. Wind N. W. Arrived the Dolphin, Gould, from Carolina for Topsham. Sailed the Primrose, Rofs, for Madeira; and the Fly, Rickards, for London.

Dartmouth, March 22. Wind N. W. Yesterday failed the Page Tender for Portsmouth; the Crawford, Hartson, and the Halsey and Suttle, Howard, from Liverpool for London; the Leopard, Grindall, from Whitehaven for Rotterdam; and the Friendship, Roberts, from Liverpool for Harwich. Remains the Amsterdam Packet, a Tender.

Poole, March 23. Wind N. W. Sailed the Samuel and Hannah, Vallis, the Industrious Bee, Durell, the Desire, Wills, the William, Thompson, the Betsey, Glead, the John and James, Cartridge, the Falcon, King, the Hope-well, Newman, a 140r London.

Comes, March 23. Wind W. Came in the Mary, Rose,

from Chichester for Lisbon and South Carolina. On the 21st failed the Southampton, Taylor, from Cork for London.

Southampton, March 24. Wind N. W. Yesterday arrived here, under Convey of the Tartar Bomb, the Expedition Packet, Mourant, the Wilmington, Fry, the Dove, Sparkes, the Judith, Smith, and the John and Mary, Pitton, all from Guernsey; and the King's Fisher, Hillgrove, from Jersey.

Dover, March 24. Wind W. Arrived the Warren Galley, Huddy, from Zant; the Atkins, Carter, from Oporto; and the Loyalty, Fowler, from Liverpool. Capt. Huddy spoke with the Planter, Latham, from Liverpool for Guinay, the 18th of March, about 30 Leagues to the Southward of Cape Clear. She had lost her Mainmast.

Deal, March 24. Wind S. W. Came down and remain, with the Ships as per list, the Alexander, Russell, and the Expedition, Chambers, both for Maryland; the Verboe, Dunn, for Turkey; and the Morning Star, Olive, for Southampton. Arrived the Eastern Branch, Gover, from Maryland; and the Seahorse, Idle, from Liverpool for Woodbridge.

Gravesend, March 24. Passed by the Trimmer, Rediand, from Lisbon; and the Providence, Burne, from Gottenburgh.

Arrived at several Ports.

At Virginia, the Argyle, Ludlow, the Virginian, Lewis, the Tyger, Metweather, and the Friends Adventure, Churchman, from Bristol; and the Roman Emperor, Walker, from Barbados.

At Gibraltar, the Triton, Harrison, from London.

At Bristol, the William and Betty, Smith, from London.

At Leostoff, the Unity, Carsteens, and the Lady Elizabeth, Repmerhusen, both from Hamburg.

In the River, the Sturdy Beggar, Belchies, from Petersburg.

L O N D O N.

On Wednesday last Mr. Recorder made a Report to his Majesty in Council of the several Prisoners now under Sentence of Death in Newgate; viz.

In December Sessions.

1. Michael Bewley, for a Burglary and Felony.
2. David Todd, a Soldier, for a Street Robbery.
3. Richard Hassel, for robbing his Masters, Messieurs Brown and Company. To be Transported for 14 Years.
4. 5. Lot Cavenah and Cordelia Taylor, for a Street Robbery.
6. John Robinson, for Burglary and Felony. To be Transported for 14 Years.
7. Thomas Haven, for robbing Mr. Croft of 39 l. 13 s. To be Transported for 14 Years.
8. Jacob Cordosa, for Burglary and Felony.

In January Sessions.

9. William Brand, a Soldier, for robbing Mr. Blackwell near Catherine Street. Pardoned.
10. John Tigh, for forging a Release. Resisted.
11. Thomas Dennis, for Horse Stealing.
12. William Burnet, for a Street Robbery.
13. Bryan Cooley, for robbing Mr. Emmerton by Temple Bar.
14. 15. 16. 17. Garret Cavenagh, Honor Cavenagh, Patrick Kelly, and Katherine Kelly, for altering the Coins in making Farthings resemble Sixpences. The Women to be Transported for Life.
18. Thomas Cummins, for robbing Mr. Bond on Snow Hill. Pardoned.
19. Daniel Wicker, for a Robbery on the Highway. To be Transported for 14 Years.

In February Sessions.

20. James Roberts, for robbing Mr. Nevill's Boy of a great Quantity of Plate.
21. James Smith, for breaking into, and robbing Mrs. Dobney's House.
22. Stephen Wright, for robbing Mr. Belchier the Surgeon in his House.
23. Ann Bradford, for robbing William Brown of 19 Guineas in a House. Pardoned.
24. Henry Bulley, for breaking into the House of Joseph Taylor, Esq; and stealing a great Quantity of Plate. Resisted.

Twelve Men, and one Woman, are order'd for Execution.

Private Letters from Gibraltar confirm the taking of the N. S. del Rosario, by his Majesty's Ship the Romney, Capt. Greenville, off Faro; but it is said, she had landed near 80,000 Dollars before Capt. Greenville spoke with her; but she is still reckon'd worth near 150,000 l. The Oxford Man of War has brought into the same Port a small Prize valued at 500 l. They add, that they have had two Shocks of an Earthquake: there, which has done considerable Damage.

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